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# OCEANIA

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# MORTUARY RITES IN NEW IRELAND (BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO)[1]

By HORTENSE POWDERMAKER

121 IN New Ireland death is a most important ritual event and the rites concerning it are of particular psychological interest. The effect of the death on the survivors may be studied from two aspects: first, that of the rites which include the traditional activities of the survivors and the duties between them; second, that dealing with their emotional attitudes. Both are studied in chronological order—at the time of preparation for death, at burial, and after burial. The problem is to ascertain the function of the rites in connection with the emotional attitudes, or more concretely, to find out how the rites meet the psychological situation caused by death.

Among the survivors one distinguishes the clan relatives (in this society, close blood relatives through the female line), acquired relatives (husband or wife) and the rest of the community. Each of these groups is affected somewhat differently by the death and each functions in a different manner. According to their function, the survivors may be divided into mourners and what for want of a better name may be called executives, those responsible for carrying out the rites. Some fall into both groups.

Before describing the rites and discussing the problems involved
105 it is necessary to summarize briefly a few ethnological facts which have a bearing on the problem. This Melanesian society is both matrilineal and matrilocal. There are two exogamous moieties, the Eagle and the Hawk, which are subdivided into clans. The local unit is the village, which has a population of several hundred

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114 [1]The ethnological field work in New Ireland was done under the auspices of the Australian National Research Council in 1929-30. The island is divided into a
122 number of linguistic units and the unit which the writer studied comprised five villages (Lesu, Ambwa, Langania, Libba and Tandis), covering approximately twelve miles on the east coast, about eighty miles from the northern end of the island. The author is now a National Research Fellow (U.S.) under the sponsorship of Professor Clark Wissler.

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and is divided into hamlets. The village of Lesu, where the writer lived, has 222 inhabitants living in fifteen hamlets. Each hamlet has its own cemetery and every native wants to be buried in the cemetery of the hamlet in which he was born.

Only the death of a very old person is considered normal. When a native who is not old dies (*i.e.*, one still able to work), his death is usually attributed to black magic. The rites are similar for all deaths, but at the death of an old person they are the most elaborate. The number of people at a funeral, the size of the feast, the elaborateness of the rites, are all graduated nicely to the age of the dead person.[2] If an infant is born dead there are no rites at all. It is buried immediately without feast or wailing. The funeral of a child takes place on the day of the death and is attended only by the people of the neighbouring hamlets. The funeral of a mature person, but not a very old one, will be held the day after death and will be a village affair, with some members of neighbouring villages there. The funeral of a very old person is a large inter-village affair, many people coming from quite distant settlements, and the body will be kept for two or three days before burial. The pattern at death is the same as it is during life. It is the old men and women who are the most important people and who are the leaders of the community.

While alive each person has a double called a *gas* which lives on the ground belonging to his totemic clan.[3] This *gas* is not seen by its living double, although there are rare occasions mentioned in folk tales when a man has met his *gas*. When a person dies his *gas* dies too. At the time of death there issues from the dying man, with his last breath, his *tinuato* or ghost, which has no connection with the *gas*. The *tinuato* dwells in the body while the native is alive and comes out only at his death, while the *gas* always dwells outside on the clan land and dies when the person dies. The *tinuato* or ghost continues to live, but its place of existence and manner of living are very vague. It belongs to the realm of the supernatural, about which no questions are asked. For a month or so after death

[2] Cf. Camilla H. Wedgwood, Death and Social Status in Melanesia, *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LVII.

[3] *Vide* the writer's Report on Research in New Ireland, *Oceania*, I, 1931, 357.

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the *tinuato* wanders around near the place of death and makes its presence known by a low whistle. Although it has no malignant qualities, it is regarded with great fear.

There is no belief in life after death (except for the ghost), in rewards or punishments, or in any deity. It is interesting to observe that for the missionised native it is the *tinuato* which goes to hell, and it is this also which has become the Christian soul.

These people, until very recently, were cannibals. All the adults of the community in which I lived had been cannibals before the white government stopped the practice. But it was only the bodies of enemies killed in warfare which were eaten, and never the body of a friend, relative, or member of the same village. As far as could be ascertained, there was no theory of imbibing the strength of the enemy warrior. It was merely another meat dish in a diet which was mostly vegetable.[4]

Cremation rather than burial was formerly practised, but as far as could be learned there has been no change in the rites. In the past the body was burned and the bones buried. The cemeteries existed then just as they do to-day—each hamlet with its own. In the rites to-day cremation is simply omitted and the whole body is buried instead of just the bones, as in the past.[5]

The following description, covering the three chronological periods, brings out the divisions among the survivors who are grouped according to their kinship to the dead person, their degree of mourning and their responsibility for the rites.

## PREPARATIONS BEFORE DEATH

In the period immediately preceding death there is even then a selection of certain relatives who will perform special duties towards the dying person. It is always the parents or children who take care of the sick person. Before death occurs, it is to the house of the parents or children that the patient is moved. The spouse is very attentive also, and the rest of the community show their interest by cooking in the hamlet of the sick person and by dis-

[4]However, one can never completely trust information gathered from hearsay only, and with no opportunity to observe the phenomenon itself.

[5]White control is responsible for the change.

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continuing dance rehearsals. A woman just past middle age named Kawitti died rather unexpectedly. The night before her death she left her husband's house and went to her sister's son's house close by. Her own son was away at a distant village. Two other old women, one of whom did die, while the other recovered, went immediately to the houses of their respective daughters. Two younger women who were very ill went to their respective mother's house. In each case the mother or the daughter affectionately cared for the sick person. But this did not prevent the husband of a sick woman from being attentive also. When Pulong was ill her husband roamed the bush looking for delicacies such as sugar cane, or made a new bamboo bed for her, or supported her while she sat up. When Nunda, an old woman, was ill and expected to die all the women of the neighbouring hamlets brought their cooking to the compound in front of the house where she was lying. The night before the death of a young man, Waketei, the women of the village did not have their dance rehearsal, which had been held nightly for the past month. In one case, that of the death of the old woman, Maling, preparations for the mortuary feast were begun before she actually died. Her grandson in the female line went to a nearby village where the fishing was very good and made arrangements to secure a large catch for the expected mortuary feast.

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## BURIAL

Immediately the death occurs the rites begin in earnest. Wailing starts at the moment life leaves the body. While everyone in the community wails, there is a difference in the intensity and duration of their wailing. The consort, the parents, the children are the chief mourners and wail the most. Next come the other clan relatives, and after them the rest of the village.[6]

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The wailing is interrupted by the carrying of the corpse to the sea to be washed. This is always done by people of the same sex

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[6]Should the children be absent at the time of the death, they return with all possible haste. The members of the same clan as the dead native will travel (walk) to distant villages for the funeral, sometimes as much as thirty or forty miles. Their consorts frequently accompany them, but it is always clear that these are in the position of satellites.

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764 and opposite moiety, *i.e.*, an "Eagle" woman would be washed by a "Hawk" woman, and vice versa. The same people then 616 carry the corpse (male or female) to the men's house, or to the house where the person had formerly lived. In discussing the 764 matter, a native will tell you that the custom is to take the corpse to the men's house, but as a matter of actual practice the writer observed that it was more often brought back to its former house, or, in the case of an old woman, to a daughter's house. The corpse [177 is clothed in its loin cloth (this of course is an innovation, the loin 291] cloth having been introduced by the whites) and set upon a bamboo structure called *bāk*,[7] in the doorway of the house. The corpse is propped up on this structure and the only native explanation is that this is something to hold the body over which the mourners will wail. At most of the funerals witnessed the *bāk* was there; but not functioning. Instead, the corpse was lying inside the house on the usual bamboo bed. The reason given for not using the *bāk* was that the corpse could not be made to sit upon it—the legs were too swollen, or some other similar reason. As soon as the body has been set upon its *bāk*, or bier, wailing is continued. By this time the people from hamlets near by have arrived, and soon those from the distant part of the village have come also. Word is immediately carried to the neighbouring villages and from these come in particular the clan relatives of the dead person. The wailing is kept up almost continuously day and night, until the body is buried. This period may be from one to three days, depending upon the age and prestige of the person who has died. During this interval preparations for the burial feast are in progress and naturally the longer the interval the more food can be collected and prepared.

764 The women go to the gardens and bring in the taro and then begin the work of scraping it and preparing it to be baked. Some- 602 times one sees the women scraping the taro and wailing at the same time. The men, in the meantime, are bringing in firewood, tending the *liga* (the pile of hot stones in which the food is baked), or are concerned with cooking pigs or fish. The actual direction of the preparations for the feast is in the hands of a clan relative—

[7] ā as in hat.

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a son or daughter, a nephew or uncle, on the mother's side, or a mother. The consort during this period is spending all his time wailing, and not taking any part in the actual preparations.

During this interval between death and burial there is a fairly large group of people assembled at the hamlet where the death occurred. All the clan relatives and their consorts—the extended family—and sometimes a few others are there. At night the sexes sleep separately. All the women sleep in one house and all the men in another, or perhaps the men sleep out of doors in a compound in front of a house. There is abstention from all sexual relations.

If the funeral is that of a very old person and the rites are being carried out in full detail dancing is part of the ceremonial. At the funeral of an old and important woman, Maling (her sister's son was a chief), there was dancing on the two nights which elapsed between the time of death and the burial. Maling died early in the day and that night all the women of the village and the neighbouring villages danced. The next night the men of the village and of neighbouring villages danced. On the following morning the corpse was buried. Each night dancing went on continuously until sunrise. Different groups danced, so that no one person danced all night long. The whole community (the village and neighbouring ones) was present as an audience. If the energy of the dancers appeared to flag, the daughter of the dead woman exhorted them to continue with promises of the payment which would later be made to them. The dances were the traditional ones used on all ritual occasions, and participants were members of the community, regardless of their kinship to the dead person. Dancing is a part of the rites only when the dead person is very old.

The actual burial, however, does not vary very much according to the age of the dead person. Some time in the interval preceding burial the corpse is put in its coffin, usually an old canoe with the pointed ends removed. Members of the opposite moiety carry the corpse from the house in which it has been resting into the cemetery. They are decorated with leaves and white lime is used as a facial adornment. These pall-bearers advance in a square formation, singing, lift up the corpse, circle around the compound two or three times with it and finally carry it into the cemetery. At the same

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time the wailing reaches its climax. Everyone wails, but the chief mourner—the consort, parent, child, sister, or brother, as the case may be—clings to the head of the corpse and wails more intensely than the others. Ridae, the widow of Wakatai, alternately waved her arms, wrung her hands, clasped the breast of the corpse and wailed, asking dramatically between the wails what was to become of her now. At another funeral, Lungam, the husband of Kawitti, behaved similarly. They follow the coffin into the cemetery, the wailing becoming louder as it is lowered into a shallow grave. As the loose ground is thrown over the grave and the coffin is covered, the wails are particularly shrill. Finally, when the grave is completely covered over, the wailing ceases, and if the chief mourner is a woman she leaves the cemetery. If a man, he remains where he is.

Now comes the feast. The climax of wailing and outburst of emotions is followed by quiet and calm. Outside the cemetery the women sit and casually chat and laugh and louse one another, or perhaps munch a taro. It is difficult to realize that these are the same people who fifteen minutes before were the participants in an intense emotional scene. Inside the cemetery, where the men are gathered, there is the same tranquillity. The baked taro and pig are distributed in the usual manner.[8] The man who is responsible for giving the feast, a son or maternal nephew or maternal uncle, makes a short speech to the effect that this feast is being held for the person who just died. Then the men eat. They appear quite cheerful and there is nothing subdued or sad about the gathering. The only thing that marks it from a feast not held at the time of the burial is that a few of the men may be so tired that they are asleep on the sand just outside the cemetery and a few people present in the cemetery are not eating at all. These are the husband, brother, maternal nephew, and perhaps a brother's son (all clan relatives with the exception of the husband).

As soon as the burial feast is over the men come out of the cemetery, and there in the compound, where the women are present,

[8] For a more detailed description of the feasts see the writer's article, Feasts in New Ireland, *American Anthropologist* (in press).

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the payments are ritually made to the owners of the pigs which were consumed at the feast, to the dancers, and to those who carried the corpse to the grave. In each case it is a close clan relative, a son, or mother's sister's son, a mother, or a mother's brother who makes the payments. It is never the surviving consort. While one person, such as a son, is considered responsible for the feast, he is assisted by other members of his clan (which is the same as that of the dead person). At the funeral of the old woman, Maling, there were fifteen pigs, all contributed, or rather paid for, by the members of her clan. Her mother's sister's son contributed three, and each one of the other clan relatives one. Most of these pigs were purchased from other people, regardless of clan or moiety, and it was to these people that the payments were made. The man making the payment held up a piece of *tsera* (shell currency) and called out the name of the man or woman to whom he was paying it and mentioned also what the payment was for. At another funeral there were ten pigs and a total payment of 39 *tsera* made for them, 32 out of the 39 being paid by clan relatives of the dead person. The remaining 7 were paid by the following three people, her husband, the chief (whose father was of the same clan as the dead woman), and another man who was of the same moiety, but of a different clan from the dead woman. This man was unmarried and most of his clan relatives were dead. He was a classificatory brother of the dead woman and she had frequently given him food. His contribution now of two *tsera* for a small pig was considered as a reciprocal gift to her. The general rule is that clan relatives pay for all the pigs and services. The exceptions just noted merely indicate that this primitive society is, like all societies, flexible in carrying out its rules.

The officiating clan relative also makes the payment to the dancers and pall-bearers.

The taro for the feast is contributed by all the women of the hamlet and the neighbouring hamlets, the clan relatives bringing a little bit more than the others, but in the matter of taro there is no fine distinction drawn as in the case of payment for pigs. Every woman brings the taro from her garden, and it involves no question of payment. Taro is never sold on any occasion, but pigs are a common object of trade.

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764 The payments for the pigs and services show very plainly that
614 it is the clan relatives who are responsible for carrying out the mortuary rites. It is an economic matter and they are the ones who are under an obligation to make the payments. There are fewer exceptions to this rule than almost any other. When Kawitti died her son was absent at a distant village. There was no maternal nephew present either, and she had no daughter. She was survived by a husband, who, in the absence of a clan relative, made a very small burial feast. It was explained at the feast that it was a very small one and that as soon as the son came home he would make a big feast. Eleven days later the son returned, having walked from a far distant village, and after he finished wailing, he immediately began preparations for a really big feast. These preparations took about a week, at the end of which there was a large feast attended by over a hundred people. It was the son who officiated at the feast and who, assisted by his clan relatives, made the necessary payments. The husband of the dead woman was completely in the background.

538 The ending of the majority of folk tales and myths is also rather
764 interesting, in showing the economic responsibility of the clan
614 relatives for the mortuary rites. An overwhelming number of the folk tales end with the death of one or more of the main characters. The tales all conclude on exactly the same note, " The man died and then all the clan relatives held a pig and made a feast."[9]

## RITES AFTER BURIAL

765 The rites after burial may be divided into two parts, those occurring in the period immediately after death (the first month) and those in the succeeding period, which extends to an indefinite number of years.

765 The sleeping arrangements and taboo on sexual intercourse for
513 the extended family, which began during the burial rites, are
834 continued in this first period. The men sleep in one house, frequently the men's house, and all the women sleep in another house, sometimes

[9] " Holding a pig " refers to holding it just before it is killed.

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the house of the dead person. These include usually the following: real and classificatory sons and daughters and their spouses, brothers and sisters, parents, nephews and nieces. This period of abstention from sexual intercourse lasts about three weeks and its end is marked by a feast. The initiative in terminating this period is taken by a clan relative (a brother in several cases observed). He holds the feast and at it announces the discontinuance of the sleeping taboo. During the time when these sex taboos are enforced all those implicated live in the hamlet where the death occurred. They not only sleep there, but cook, eat, and spend their entire time at this hamlet. One death occurred in the hamlet next to the one in which I was living, involving most of the people in my hamlet, which was consequently deserted for the three weeks following the death. The men spend their time sitting around the cemetery, talking and doing nothing. Their conversation is mostly about any practical affair that happens to engage their attention. After one death it was about the expected visit of the district officer to collect taxes, a very momentous affair in the life of the native, but having nothing to do with the recent death. Each day the men eat together in the cemetery. The women prepare the food together and remain in the compound to eat, but not with the men, instead of returning to their own house to eat, as they usually do. Some of these people are observing food taboos. The taboo is on eating taro, the staple food of the native, and is observed by parents or children, brothers or sisters, and husband or wife. This taboo is kept until a few days before the mourners go back to their ordinary sleeping arrangements, and its end is also marked with a feast, when one of those observing the taboo hits a baked pig on the back before it is cut up for the feast. The hitting of the pig is a signal that the taboo is lifted. If dance rehearsals happen to have been in progress they are discontinued for about ten days after the death.[10] A brother gives the signal for the resumption of the dance rehearsals by sounding the *kolamuth* (a hollowed tree trunk used as a drum). The native evidently makes a distinction between the

[10]Dance rehearsals are carried on for months before a rite, of which they are a part, is held.

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765 535 act of dancing and the symbol, or what the dancing represents. While dance rehearsals are taboo in the period immediately preceding death and in the period following death, dancing is part of the burial rites, participated in by the whole community, and represents an outward expression of their feelings aroused by the death. But the dance rehearsals have no connection with death (they may be rehearsals for circumcision, marriage, or some other rite) and as such have no psychological association with the recent event and would mar the continuum of expressed community feeling after a burial.

769 532 778 The years following the death are marked by the making of a *malaŋgon* and the giving of many feasts. The *malaŋgon* is an elaborate carving which varies in size and design. The carvings are divided into a number of large classifications, each of which is subdivided into smaller groups, and each division large and small has its own name. On a large number of them there is a figure for each dead relative for whom the *malaŋgon* is made, and sharks, birds, and fish are frequent in the design. There are also other carvings on which no figure of the dead relative occurs. The right to make a *malaŋgon* is owned by a clan, which can sell the right to another clan. The original owner then loses the right to make it and must buy the right to make a different *malaŋgon* from another clan. When the *malaŋgon* is made and displayed, there are elaborate rites continuing for months and including dancing, feasts and special rites, which vary according to each particular *malaŋgon*.

769 532 554 778 The *malaŋgon* is usually made by a maternal nephew or by a son, if the dead person is a woman.[11] Occasionally other close clan relatives may make one too. The time for the *malaŋgon* rites may be a year after death, or it may be five years after death. The time depends on how long it takes to collect the wealth necessary for holding the rites. Frequently one carving will be made for several dead relatives at one time. As far as the writer was able to ascertain, the making of the *malaŋgon* and the rites concerning it

[11] The clan relative does not actually make the *malaŋgon* but pays a skilled carver to make it according to his directions.

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have no effect on the *tinualo* (ghost), the *gas* (double), or anything connected with the dead person. The rites, while nominally carried out in honour of the dead person, seem to have as their real function to increase the prestige of the survivor. Over and over again I was told that if the *malaŋgon* was not made, the clan relative who should have made it would fall in prestige, that he would be the object of much gossip, and that everyone would say that he did not have sufficient wealth to make one. Nothing more hurtful to a native's prestige than this could be said.[12]

Besides the *malaŋgon* feasts there are many other feasts given after death over an indefinite period of years. They are made usually by one of the relatives of the extended family who observed the sleeping or sexual taboos immediately after death. The maternal nephew and the son, if the dead person is a woman, are the most frequent givers of these feasts. Many other feasts, which have an obvious purpose not connected with death, are held in the cemetery and are considered in some way not very clear to me to be for all the dead buried in that cemetery. A feast given on the occasion of a child having its first tooth, or one held simply because there is plenty of food, will be held in the cemetery and is considered in some subtle manner to be held for the dead buried there as well as for the explicit reason given.

To summarize the description of the rites, it has been shown that the chief mourners are the parents, children, and the consort. Next come the other clan relatives and after them the rest of the community. The direction of the rites and economic responsibility for them is in the hands of a close clan relative, the spouse taking no active part at all. Those observing the food taboos are the same close clan relatives and also the spouse. The sexual taboo involves a larger group, the whole extended family. Intimate duties connected with the corpse, such as washing and carrying it to the cemetery, are performed by people of the opposite moiety, who are not kindred to the dead person, and therefore not chief mourners.

[12]The subject of the *malaŋgon* is a complicated one and a monograph might be written on this alone. The writer will present material in another context.

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## EMOTIONAL ATTITUDES

121 Emotional attitudes are by their nature less easy to observe than rites. But one can, first, observe expressions of emotion, or lack of such expression; secondly, talk over the matter with the participants in the rites; and thirdly, listen to their own discussions. Also, because these are on the whole an extravert type of people, showing their emotions plainly, one can get more from observation than one could from a more reserved people. But even then the subject is a complicated one. When is an emotion real and when is it only a ritual expression? It may be both. How much of the emotion is spontaneous and how much is induced by the ritual? Motives may be very complex. Real grief may be mixed with the desire to do the proper thing and show off one's wealth at the mortuary rites of a loved relative. A sophisticated and introspective person of our own society is not always able to distinguish all the motives underlying his own actions. It is not to be expected that an ethnologist can answer all these questions for the native, but he may set down a series of careful observations.

761 During the period of illness immediately preceding death and
152 during the burial rites, the survivors, as far as could be observed, have no fear of any ghost or other supernatural element. Such emotions as fear, awe, etc., sometimes associated with death, appear
[775] to be completely lacking. It must be remembered in this connection that these people have no belief in life after death. For two days I sat with a group of women about the bed of Pulong, a sick woman who was expected to die. Their conversation never turned to any of the supernatural aspects of death, but was always about some very concrete matter such as a medicine for the sick woman. Neither their conversation nor attitude indicated any other feeling except affectionate concern and sorrow. The parents, children and spouse show these feelings particularly. Ongas, the husband of Pulong, the woman just mentioned, sat with bent head in front of the house and neither ate nor talked. There was no mistaking his real sorrow. The rest of the community seemed not to be affected by such deep emotions. The members of the neighbouring hamlets came and cooked in the compound of the sick person, but there was the usual

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chatter, the telling of jokes, and the rather casual happy atmosphere which always accompanies communal cooking.[13]

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During the burial rites there is no evidence of fear. The dominant emotion is sorrow, felt in varying degrees by the survivors and expressed in wailing. The spouse and clan relatives seem to show a real personal grief based on love and affection for the dead person. But the way in which some of the other members of the community turn from dramatic wailing to joking conversation would indicate that their sorrow cannot be very deep. At one funeral a group of five or six men, not clan relatives, came out of the house where they had been loudly wailing over the corpse and almost immediately burst into boisterous laughter because a bamboo bench on which they had been sitting tilted slightly. There appeared to be no feeling that the laughter following the wailing was out of place. Frequently, conversation of the non-clan relatives immediately following their wailing would be light and amusing. As a rule this did not hold for the consort. He or she generally wailed continuously, stopping only for the necessary rest, without any light interludes. But there was the usual exception. One widow after a most prolonged and dramatic outburst of wailing, five minutes later turned to a few other women and made a joking remark, which had no connection with the death. There were no comments on this behaviour, but later she was an object of unfavourable gossip, because she resumed sexual relations with a second husband too soon after her first husband's death.

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If the deceased is not old, *i.e.*, if he was an active member of the community at the time of his death, there is another element in the sorrow besides grief over the loss of a dear friend or relative.

[13] I was unable to get much information on the attitude of the dying person towards death. It so happened that in those cases where I was able to be present before the death occurred, the dying person was either unconscious, or too ill to talk, or to be bothered by an ethnologist's questions. However, as far as I could gather, there is a reluctance to die. This was seen quite clearly when a middle aged woman who had been ill and expected to die, recovered. Her happiness in her recovery, her renewed interest in life, showed that she was very glad to be still living. Natives in good health mention that they will die simply as a fact that is bound to occur some time. Frequently in working with informants on the subject of inheritance of property, they would say casually to illustrate a point, " When I die, this and this will be inherited by . . . etc."

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761 There is vexation caused by the loss of a worker. The annoyance
152 over the economic loss is felt both by the clan relatives and by the rest of the community. A large amount of work is done communally and so the loss of a worker is of real consequence. The surviving clan relatives have one less person to assist them in the making of a *malaŋgon*, a ritual feast, or any other rite in which the members of the clan co-operate. The village as a whole also feels the loss of one person in their communal work, such as the preparations for the feasts at circumcision rites, and other rites in which all the members of the village co-operate. At the death of a young man Wakatei, his mother's sister's son, Lungam, who was in charge of the rites, was in a really bad temper owing to the fact that the dead man was young and a good worker and the death was a real economic loss to himself. At Kawitti's death the same element of economic loss entered into the sorrow. She was a middle-aged woman and had always been zealous in contributing her share of taro, and industrious in preparing it for the village feasts. Many members of the community told me (spontaneously, without any questioning on my part) how sorry they were about Kawitti's death, because she was such a good worker. The realization of an economic loss is openly expressed, as was the case with Lungam, and also with the rest of the community. There is no need for any hypocrisy, such as, "we loved him for himself alone."

775 It is not until after the burial rites that the element of fear
152 enters into the emotional attitude. There is now the fear of a ghost or *tinuato*, mentioned in the beginning of this paper. After the burial of the body, it is supposed to wander around near its former habitation and to make its presence known by a low whistle. The native is very much afraid of this ghost and gives as the reason that the ghost is untrue and unreal. It has no malignant qualities and the dread seems to be based purely on the fact that it is uncanny. But there are no rites to lay the ghost, nor any rites of which the function is to alleviate fear. The fact, however, that all the members of the extended family sleep in the one hamlet after the burial rites may tend to lessen the fear. If they are together, they will not be as fearful as if separated, but this does not keep them from being afraid at other times, nor does it lay the ghost. Several weeks

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after Kawitti's death the chief, Ongas, one of those observing sleeping taboos, started off to another village about four miles away to see a relative. He returned in about half an hour, very much out of breath and quite scared because he had heard a low whistle, which he believed indicated the presence of Kawitti's ghost. He hurried home and did not leave the hamlet for several days. The fear is particularly active for several months after death and then diminishes, to be replaced by the fear of the ghost of the next person who dies. The ghost is never laid and the fear never completely absent. However, no emotion can persist with the same degree of intensity over any long period of time, and as the grief is spent and new interests come up, the fear of the ghost is put in the background. The situation which called up the ghost has been taken care of by certain rites and no longer exists. As the situation is shelved, so too is the ghost which accompanies it, even though there were no definite rites to accomplish this.[14]

## THE FUNCTION OF RITES

The mortuary rites have a double function. They serve both to differentiate the groups of survivors and to provide a means of expression for their emotions. The various taboos set off one group of mourners from another and from the rest of the community. Food taboos set apart the chief mourners—the immediate family—from the others, and in the same way the sleeping customs and sexual taboos involved set off the extended family from the rest of the community. The taboo on dance rehearsals after the burial applies to the whole community. The importance of the taboo is in proportion to the degree of grief experienced by the survivors. It is obvious that food and sex are of more significance than dance rehearsals. Abstinence from eating taro and from sexual inter-

[14] An interesting psychoanalytic interpretation of the ghost has been suggested by Dr. George Daniels, to whom I am indebted for reading the manuscript and making several suggestions. The ambivalence of any close attachment is well known, *i.e.*, both love and hate would be a part of any deep attachment. In order to break the attachment both these emotional attitudes have to be detached from the object. The first (love) comes out in grief. The negative feeling comes out after the discharge of grief in the ritualistic mourning, in the form of fear, or a projection of their own feeling of guilt on account of the ambivalence of their attitude.

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182 764 course is practised only by the chief mourners and closest relatives, while everyone refrains from the dance rehearsals.

Turning to the second function—the ritual expression of emotion, we find these emotions to be, (a) sorrow over the loss of a close relative or friend, (b) sorrow due to economic loss, if the person is young, (c) fear of a ghost after the burial rites. The mourners may be classified according to the depth of their emotions. The parents, children, spouse, and close clan relatives grieve most intensely and the degree of wailing is consistent with the blood relationship of the survivor to the corpse. The exception is the spouse, who is not kin to the dead person, but is a member of the opposite moiety. Here the natural ties of affection are fully recognized, even though he is not a clan relative. But while it is appreciated that his sorrow may be deep, he is never classed with the clan relatives. His loss can be replaced, and everyone knows that after a decent interval he will take another wife. The loss of a member to the clan, however, cannot be replaced.

It is the clan relatives who bear the economic responsibility for the rites and who in so doing acquire additional prestige. This [181] society is almost completely motivated by a desire for prestige, and the acquisition of it might well be regarded as partial compensation for the loss of the dead clan relative.

The chief mourners express their sorrow in wailing, their economic loss quite openly through bad temper and conversation, and the clan mourners receive a certain amount of compensation through increasing their prestige by giving feasts, making a *malaygon*, etc. The chief mourners also express their grief negatively by refraining, for about a month, from two of the most common acts of their daily life, eating taro and having sexual intercourse.

The survivors who are less deeply touched by the death, *i.e.*, the rest of the community outside of the clan relatives and consort, also wail, but their wailing is not prolonged and, in Biblical phrase, is more "weeping with those that weep." Their mourning seems to be somewhat in deference to those most bereaved and to allow the feelings of these to come to the climax at a ritualistic exhibition. It is they who spare the chief mourners the duty of washing the the corpse and lowering it into the grave.

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The ritual for expressing grief might be said to be exceptionally well adapted for the release of the emotion aroused by death. And the emotion is soon spent. There is no sorrowful brooding. The *malaŋgon* rites may be carried out years after the death, but they are not done in the spirit of sorrowful mourning for the dead, but to get prestige for the living. The rites might be termed a hygienic method for handling certain psychological tensions caused by death.

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